

Message Text

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SUBJECT: INTERVIEW WITH PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST LEADER CUNHAL

1. SUMMARY: IN APPARENTLY EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW IN JUNE 7 "RUDE PRAVO", PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST SECRETARY GENERAL CUNHAL OFFERED SEVERAL COMMENTS ON EVOLUTION OF PRESENT AND FUTURE POLITICAL CHANGES IN PORTUGAL, WARNING OF RESIDUAL PRESENCE OF RIGHTISTS IN GOVERNMENT AND ARMY, AND GENERALLY PORTRAYING HIS PARTY AS IMPORTANT PROGRESSIVE ELEMENT IN PUSH FOR FURTHER REFORM.

2. DESCRIBING PRESENT PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AS TRANSITIONAL REGIME INFLUENCED BY VARIOUS DOMESTIC POLITICAL FORCES, CUNHAL CAUTIONED THAT COURSE OF FUTURE POLITICAL CHANGES IN COUNTRY WAS NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR AND THAT "FASCISTS" STILL HAD STRONG POSITIONS IN GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY. NOTING PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY (CPP) COOPERATION IN PRESENT COALITION GOVERNMENT, CUNHAL DESCRIBED PORTUGUESE ARMY AS MAIN FORCE FOR SECURING OPPORTUNITY FOR PORTUGUESE PEOPLE OF TRUE SELF-DETERMINATION RE FORM OF SOCIETY. FURHTER DEMOCRATIC CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS, UNCLASSIFIED

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ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC SPHERE, WOULD HOWEVER BE COMPLICATED

BY PRESENCE OF STRONG MONOPOLIES IN COUNTRY.

3. CUNHAL SAID CPP WAS INSISTING ON THREE PARTICULAR ELEMENTS FOR INCLUSION IN CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICY: ENDING COLONIAL WAR, SECURING BASIC CIVIL RIGHTS, AND PREPARING FREE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS. CUNHAL SAID CPP BELIEVED COLONIAL QUESTION REQUIRED POLITICAL, NOT MILITARY, RESOLUTION AND SELF-DETERMINATION BY TERRITORIES' POPULATIONS. THIS POSITION HE DESCRIBED AS AT VARIANCE WITH ATTITUDES OF OTHER ELEMENTS IN OR SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT.

4. NOTING THAT PRESENT "PROVISIONAL" GOVERNMENT CAME INTO BEING BY VIRTUE ARMED FORCES, IN WHICH PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS CURRENTLY HAD UPPER HAND, CUNHAL REASONED THAT FURTHER MOVES TOWARD COMPLETE DEMOCRATIZATION REQUIRED THAT GOVERNMENT DEPEND ON PARTICIPATION OF AND SUPPORT BY DIVERGENT POLITICAL GROUPS, EXCLUSIVE OF RIGHTIST ("FASCIST") ELEMENTS STILL FOUND IN GOVERNMENT AND ARMY RANKS. OPEN CPP COOPERATION WITH SOCIALIST PARTY WAS SPECIFICALLY INDICATED BY CUNHAL AS DESIRABLE; INCIDENTALLY, HE CLAIMED THAT AFTER APRIL 25 COUP CPP WAS "ONLY ORGANIZED DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE COUNTRY", OTHERS HAVING BEEN REPRESSED IN YEARS SINCE 1926. CPP WOULD NOT RETREAT, HE ADDED, FROM LASTING POLICY OF CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH INTERNATIONAL WORKERS' MOVEMENT. CUNHAL SPECIFICALLY DESCRIBED PAST AND PRESENT SUPPORT FOR CPP BY OTHERS CPS AND SOCIALIST COUNTRIES, SOVIET UNION IN PARTICULAR, AS ESSENTIAL FACTOR IN CCP SUCCESS IN PICKING UP WORKING-CLASS SUPPORT. CUNHAL DID NOT, HOWEVER, REFER SPECIFICALLY TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA OR HIS YEARS IN EXILE HERE.

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